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MAHATHIR-COMMUNITIES
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KUALA LUMPUR, SEPT 17 (BERNAMA) -- THE MALAYSIAN GOVERNMENT'S LIBERAL POLICY OF ALLOWING THE VARIOUS COMMUNITIES TO PRACTISE THEIR CULTURE AND USE THEIR MOTHER TONGUE CANNOT BE MATCHED BY MANY OTHER COUNTRIES, PRIME MINISTER DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD SAID TODAY.

EVEN IN WESTERN COUNTRIES, WHICH CLAIM TO BE LIBERAL, THERE IS NO PLACE FOR OTHER CULTURES AND LANGUAGES EXCEPT THEIR OWN, HE SAID.

+IT IS BECAUSE OF THIS THAT THE YOUNGER GENERATION OF MALAYSIANS WHO HAVE MIGRATED TO AUSTRALIA, FOR EXAMPLE, HAVE LOST THEIR IDENTITY OWING TO THEIR USE OF THE LOCAL LANGUAGE AND THEIR PRACTICE OF THE LOCAL CULTURE,+ HE SAID WHEN OPENING THE GENERAL MEETING OF THE FEDERATION OF MALAYSIAN HOKKIEN ASSOCIATIONS, HERE.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID MALAYSIA DID NOT PRACTISE THE POLICIES OF CERTAIN COUNTRIES WHICH DROVE OUT COMMUNITIES THEY DISLIKED, SHOT ANYONE ASSUMED TO BE AN ADVERSARY AND WERE UNFAIR IN THE TREATMENT OF GROUPS CONSIDERED TO BE OUTSIDERS.

HE SAID THE LIBERAL ATTITUDE OF THE MALAYSIAN GOVERNMENT WAS TO ENSURE CONTINUED PEACE IN A COUNTRY WHERE PROSPERITY WAS THE KEY TO NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT. -- MORE

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THE OUTCOME OF THIS POLICY WAS A GROWING ECONOMY, AND INTERNATIONAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF MALAYSIA'S SUCCESS IN AREAS WHERE OTHER COUNTRIES HAD FAILED, HE ADDED.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR TRACED EVENTS IN 1987 WHICH GAVE RISE TO TENSION FOLLOWING COMMUNAL PROBLEMS, AND WHICH WORSENERED WHEN A SOLDIER SHOT AT CIVILIANS IN THE CITY.

HE SAID THE FEAR AMONG THE PEOPLE OF A POSSIBLE RIOT SPARKED OFF THE TENSION, AND THEIR DAILY CHORES WERE HAMPERED.

SUCH EVENTS WOULD HAVE A NEGATIVE EFFECT ON NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES BECAUSE THE COMMUNITIES WOULD BE SUSPICIOUS OF ONE ANOTHER, HE ADDED.

HE SAID THE PEOPLE MUST MAINTAIN THE PREVAILING PEACEFUL ATMOSPHERE WHEREBY THEY DID NOT FEAR MOVING ABOUT FROM ONE PLACE TO ANOTHER -- THE CHINESE NOT AFRAID OF GOING TO A MALAY VILLAGE AND THE MALAYS NOT UNDULY WORRIED OF PASSING THROUGH A TOWN HEAVILY POPULATED BY CHINESE.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID SUCH A TRANQUIL ATMOSPHERE WAS DIFFICULT TO COME BY IN OTHER COSMOPOLITAN COUNTRIES WHICH HAD TO DEAL WITH CIVIL WARS OR COMMUNAL RIOTS.

PROLONGED CRISES OF THIS NATURE KEPT THESE COUNTRIES IN THEIR BACKWARD STATE, HE ADDED. -- MORE

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DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR ASKED ALL COMMUNITIES TO UNDERSTAND GOVERNMENT POLICIES WHICH HE SAID ENCOURAGED UNRESTRICTED ECONOMIC GROWTH AND AT THE SAME TIME ENSURED THAT NO ONE COMMUNITY WAS NEGLECTED IN THE DISTRIBUTION OF WEALTH.

HE SAID NO OTHER COUNTRY COULD ACCOMPLISH THESE TWO THINGS -- FAIR ECONOMIC DISTRIBUTION, AND HAVING NO RESTRICTION TO ITS GROWTH.

THE PRIME MINISTER REMINDED ALL COMMUNITIES TO CONTINUE TO EXERCISE TOLERANCE AND TO BE CONSIDERATE TO ONE ANOTHER TO MAINTAIN PROSPERITY.

HE SAID THE GOVERNMENT WAS CONVINCED THAT ITS POLICIES HAD BEEN IMPLEMENTED FAIRLY, BASED ON THE RESPONSE OF EACH COMMUNITY SO FAR.

+IF ALL COMMUNITIES HAVE THEIR GRIEVANCES, IT IS EVIDENT THAT THERE IS FAIRNESS AND THE GOVERNMENT IS IMPLEMENTING THE RIGHT POLICIES BECAUSE NO ONE COMMUNITY IS GETTING MORE THAN ANOTHER,+ HE ADDED. -- BERNAMA

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